

Edition 16

**MARSH**  
RACING

January 2024

# MARSH MONTHLY



*Inside this month...*

Look back at this month's winners  
Hear from Stephen

Karaka Yearling Purchases  
Group 1 AND Karaka Million Success



## Red dot report

**What a amazing month it has been for both us and our owners at Marsh Racing! It is hard to think of a month in my training career where we have experienced so much success, and this is a true reflection of our loyal owners and brilliant team of staff who do a world class job preparing our horses.**

Mercurial's win in the Group 1 Telegraph Handicap at Trentham was particularly special, and incredibly it was 50 years to the day that Dad won it as a jockey aboard one of his favourite horses "Show Gate". Mercurial's rise to a Group 1 winner typifies what can be achieved in our sport. He has continued to improve through the grades with every preparation, and while unassuming in stature he is the ultimate racehorse with a massive desire to win. Equally as good are his owners, a group who love their racing and sure know how to celebrate!

The Karaka Millions night is unquestionably our sports flagship event, and the return to Ellerslie this year was best summed up by race caller George Simon as "The most eagerly anticipated race day in New Zealand's History". To win the nights blue ribbon event, the \$1million TAB Karaka Millions 2YO with Velocious, was one of the greatest thrills in my training career. Racing in the colors of our long-time supporters Go Racing and ridden by the world's best jockey and good mate James McDonald made it even more special. Her dominant win by over 2 lengths was exactly what the filly deserved, she is a pleasure to train and has not put a foot wrong all preparation. It is very rare that a horse has such a faultless preparation, especially a 2YO. We look forward to welcoming her back into the stable after a short let up as we build towards the Group 1 Sistema Stakes in March.

Investing at sales time and giving owners the opportunity to be involved in our stable has been one of our primary focuses over the past few years. Almaceta, Merchant Queen, Moet Down, Spring Queen, Dubai Diva, Rockin Rosie & Financier were all January winners that were selected by us at public auction. There is no doubt we have increased the quality of bloodstock in the stable and we are really starting to see this investment pay dividends.

The support for our purchases over the past week at Karaka has been phenomenal. We finished the week having purchased eight outstanding yearlings, finishing as one of the leading domestic buyers with a total spend of over \$1.5million. Due to overwhelming popularity, we have now fully syndicated all of our 2024 NZB Karaka Yearlings. I want to thank our incredibly loyal owners for their support and trust they've put in us; I am confident we have never worked harder to source the best group of young horses at the best value.

We are not finished yet and plan to be very active at this year's Inglis Easter Yearling Sale in April. We have had remarkable success over the last few years from limited purchases in Australia including stakes performed fillies Illumination, La Bella Beals, Dubai Diva, Merchant Queen and Moet Down. Those who missed out on our Karaka purchases will have plenty of opportunity to be involved in the class of 2024 as we continue to build our team who will compete for massive prize money over the next few seasons here in NZ.

There is still so much to look forward to this season starting this weekend at Te Rapa as they host the Group 1 Herbie Dyke Stake (\$600,000) & Group 1 BCD Sprint (\$400,000), we look forward to keeping up momentum as we look to achieve our best season on record.

Lastly a huge thanks again to my team of staff. Led by assistant trainer Rhys Mildon, they have continued to be the driving force behind our success. It is clearly our busiest period of the year, and our results are a true reflection of their skill and dedication. We can't wait for the dust to settle and celebrate as a team soon!!

*Stephen*

## Mercurial prevails in Telegraph



*Article courtesy of NZ Racing Desk*

**Sam Spratt teamed up with arguably New Zealand’s most improved racehorse to land a boilover victory in Saturday’s Gr.1 JR & N Berkett Telegraph (1200m) at Trentham – her third time triumphing in a meeting that once came close to claiming her life.**

Saturday’s Telegraph heroics aboard Mercurial (NZ) (Burgundy) came some 21 years after Spratt suffered severe head injuries in a shocking fall in an undercard race on Telegraph Day on January 25, 2003. She not only recovered but later made a triumphant return to the saddle, going on to join New Zealand’s 1000-win club and boasting 20 Group One wins and counting.

Spratt is now a three-time Telegraph winner, with Mercurial following in the footsteps of her old favourite Mufhasa (NZ) (Pentire) (2009 and 2011).

“It’s 21 years ago almost to the day that I had my fall on this day at this track, so it was good to tick this one off,” Spratt said. “I don’t have any memory of it – it’s basically a year of lost memory, so it’s just what people say. I wasn’t really supposed to be riding again after it, but I’m too stubborn for that!”

Mercurial arrived at Trentham on Saturday as a last-start Group One placegetter, having finished third behind Waitak (NZ) (Proisir) and Bonny Lass (NZ) (Super Easy) in the Sistema Railway (1200m) at Pukekohe on New Year’s Day. But the five-year-old flew under the radar as an \$18 outsider in a field headed by Bonny Lass (\$2.90) and Dragon Leap (Pierro) (\$4.20). Spratt showed her customary front-running prowess aboard Mercurial, recovering from an awkward start to charge forward and take up a position on the outside of Express Yourself (NZ) (Shamexpress).

The pace came right out of the race through the middle stages, causing significant interference to several runners in the chasing pack and leading Lincoln's Kruz (Kuroshio) to dislodge jockey Jonathan Riddell.

Mercurial stayed well out of trouble and was full of running as he threw down the gauntlet to Express Yourself at the top of the straight. That rival rose to meet the challenge, and the pair went to war at the 300m.

Favourite Bonny Lass regathered herself after a rocky run and found the line strongly late in the piece, but it remained a two-horse battle to the line and Mercurial won it by a nose. Bonny Lass finished third, a neck behind the first pair.

"That was really good," Spratt said. "He knuckled a little bit at the start, but he showed plenty of pace to get back up there. We managed to get some easy sectionals after that.

"He's so tough. The more they came at him, the more he stuck his head out. I thought I might have had my nose in front on the line, but I wasn't totally sure. I didn't want to get too confident and excited. It was awesome to see the photo finish confirm that we'd won it."

The Telegraph was the sixth win of a 27-start career for the Stephen Marsh-trained Mercurial, who has also had 11 minor placings. He has now earned more than \$514,000 in stakes for an ownership group that includes his five breeders.

Mercurial was a Rating 75 winner at the equivalent meeting 12 months ago, and his first start in open company was in only March of last year. In his 11 starts since then, he has recorded two wins and six placings and established himself among the country's top-flight sprinters.

"This is a massive thrill," Marsh said. "If you'd asked me even six months ago whether this horse could win a Telegraph or a Railway, I wouldn't have said he could.

"But he's just so tough. A couple of people even said to me before the race that he's so laid-back and such a good doer, it almost looks like he needs another run. He'll go home tonight, he'll eat up, and he'll probably end up going around again on Karaka Millions night. He really is the man.

"He's just one of those horses that works, eats, sleeps and performs. Every run this time in has been unbelievable.

"We got a beautiful run outside the leader today. They were clipping heels and in all sorts of trouble behind us, but Sam put him into a good spot and he's just so tough. I actually thought we'd run second on the line, but we got the win.

"It's a great team of owners. They bred him and have still got the mare. They all came to the Railway and they're all here again today, so it's a real thrill for them. I actually only got this horse because another trainer didn't answer his phone, so I was only their second choice! But we've got them in the team and I think we'll have them for life now.

"They don't give Group Ones away, and there's just nothing that beats it. It's a great buzz."

## Velocious Karaka Million Triumph



*Article courtesy of NZ Racing Desk*

**Go Racing's highly regarded Velocious justified her favouritism with a dominant win in the \$1 Million TAB Karaka Millions 2YO on Saturday.**

Ridden by expat Kiwi Jockey James McDonald, Velocious jumped away well out of the barriers and McDonald was able to secure the coveted one-one position with Velocious, where she was able to settle beautifully. Entering the straight, McDonald guided his charge three-wide and Velocious was able to reel in the leaders and hit the front with 250m to go. She held out the late challenge of Damask Rose to win by 2-1/2 lengths.

"It's bloody great," an enthused McDonald said post-race. "It has eluded me a little bit this race, I have finished a few seconds, but I was on the right filly today, (who was) trained to an absolute minute. She gave me a beautiful ride and produced the goods, it was unreal."

McDonald was impressed with Velocious' talent and tenacity, and he believes there is a bright future instore for the daughter of Written Tycoon.

"I could feel them coming (in the straight) but she pulled out all the stops, she didn't feel like she was ever going to get beaten," McDonald said. "She is very good, and I just love her tenacity, she is just a gorgeous filly."

With victory, Velocious extended her career record to three wins and a placing from four starts, with her Karaka Millions triumph joining her win in the Listed Challenge Stakes (1100m) and third placing in the Gr.2 Eclipse Stakes (1200m).

Trainer Stephen Marsh was quietly confident heading into the race, saying his filly had a faultless preparation and had the benefit of McDonald aboard.

"We thought we had the right filly all the way through, and James was very keen to come and ride her," he said. "We think he (McDonald) is the world's best and for Go Racing and Marsh Racing to give him his first Karaka Million (2YO) win is exciting for everyone."

“It is one of those preparations where nothing has gone wrong – we haven’t nursed her, she hasn’t had shin soreness, we haven’t done anything. She has been the perfect racehorse the whole way through, so we weren’t actually that nervous going into it. We felt we had the right horse, and she is just an absolute gem to train, does what you like, she is unbelievable.”

It was an emotional victory for Marsh, who dedicated it to his mother Kay, who is suffering from ill-health.

“I just want to say, that is for my mum,” he said.

It was the second win in the race for Marsh and syndicator Go Racing, who combined to win the race in 2013 with Ruud Awakeing, and Go Racing principal Albert Bosma was glad he could get another with his great mate, particular during trying times for his family.

“It is special for us, but it is probably more special for Stephen and his family with what they are going through. He has been like a brother, 20 years we have been doing this,” Bosma said.

Velocious was purchased by Go Racing out of Inglewood Stud’s 2023 New Zealand Bloodstock Book 1 Yearling Sale draft for \$190,000 with a view towards to the Karaka Millions 2YO.

“Over the last five or six years we have focussed on middle-distance horses for Australia, that is where the money is,” Bosma said. “Now things have changed and last year was the first time we said we have got to start focussing back on New Zealand with all these amazing changes Entain is bringing in and these great races. We bought this filly for this race, and we have done it.

“It is hard to win races and when you buy something with a plan, 99 times (out of 100) it doesn’t come off, and it came off this time and we had the right plan. I am so happy for Stephen, and I am so happy for us.

“Seven wins in a row by Te Akau may never be beaten but I think it is going to get harder and harder going forward, there are going to be so many people trying to win this race.”



## Karaka Sales purchases 2024

We are proud to add eight quality yearlings to the stable. They will now have a break before commencing their education with some of New Zealand's leading young horse educators, before heading into the Marsh stable.

All purchased lots can be viewed on our website [www.marshracing.com/purchases](http://www.marshracing.com/purchases) or click on the photos to view their page.

All purchases have now sold!



Lot 79

Ardrossan x Femme Britania



Lot 97

Satono Aladdin x From Eden



Lot 116

Written By x Gypsy Snitz



Lot 218

Savabeel x Maxmara

**Karaka Sales purchases 2024**



Lot 282  
Capitalist x Our Pride and Joy



Lot 353  
Almanzor x Rockabyebaby



Lot 415  
Hello Youmzain x Smoulder



Lot 828  
King's Legacy x Malmoosa



## January Winners



2/01/24 Tauranga

### **Almaceta**

### **Craig Grylls**

2022 Bourbon Lane Stable New Zealand LLC  
Partnership, 8 Mates Syndicate, Mrs L J Botros, D  
Honiss, G W Hunt, Mrs B M & L D Pettifer, L & T Ross

### **Happy Hire Maiden**

1200

*Replay.*



2/01/24 Tauranga

### **Double Vision**

### **Michael McNab**

*D Karreman*

### **Mills Reef Wines**

### **Maiden 3YO**

*Replay.*



2/01/24 Tauranga

### **Dodde**

### **Michael McNab**

*J F Bruford & C J Griffin*

### **Epic Journeys Ultimate**

### **European Tour 2100**

*Replay.*



12/01/24 Tauranga

## Chakana

Courtney Barnes

*A Cooke, G Elliffe, M Kingston, J Lindsay, J L Owen, D  
G Price, B G Stewart & B R W Tallott*

Ray White Whakatane &  
Ohope 1400

*Replay.*



13/01/24 Trentham

## Mercurial

Sam Spratt

*C T Jones, R I Wyeth, T Myers, M Darvill, T  
Phillips & A W Flexman*

JR & N Berkett Telegraph  
Group 1

*Replay.*



14/01/24 Ellerslie

## Merchant Queen

Sam Spratt

*I G Bennett, W L Bolton, A Bristow, C Cygler, Dennis E  
Foster, P A Fowler, J R Gray, B J Martelletti, J A McIntosh, G  
McNaughton, Mrs B M & L D Pettifer, Two Fat Cows  
Syndicate, P Williams, J G & Mrs S K Young*

Barfoott and Thompson  
Ellerslie Is Bacck 1200

*Replay.*



17/01/24 Te Rapa

## Our Turn

### Warren Kennedy

*AM Darvill, A W Flexman, C T Jones, T Myers, T  
Phillips & R Wyeth*

Alexandra Racing Club  
Pirongia Cup

*Replay.*



17/01/24 Te Rapa

## Moet Down

### Michael McNab

*Heels and Hooves Syndicate*

Countdown to Karakaa 2024  
3YO

*Replay.*



17/01/24 Te Rapa

## Spring Queen

### Masa Hashizume

*S B Marsh, R B Marsh, R K Marsh & D M Johnson*

Legends Day-February 10 Mile

*Replay.*



20/01/24 Trentham

## Dubai Diva

Daniel Stackhouse

*Mrs R A Carter, Dennis E Foster, B & E Kendall, S B Marsh, Mrs B M & L D Pettifer*

John Turkington Forestry

Duoro Cup

*Replay.*



21/01/24 Pukekohe

## Rockin Rosie

Sam Weatherley

*2022 Bourbon Lane Stable New Zealand LLC Partnership, G L Bate, S R Bruce, Mrs R A Carter, E H Falconer, D J Hooke, B Kendall, Dr P H Mitchell & S W Platt*

Auckland Co-Op Taxis

1300

*Replay.*



24/01/24 Matamata

## Financier

Sam Weatherley

*2021 Bourbon Lane Stables New Zealand LLC Partnership, Dr P H Mitchell, A P Saker, G R Tomlinson & G R Wilson*

Paper Plus Matamata 1400

*Replay.*



26/01/24 Hastings

## Miss Martini

Sam Weatherley

*A & C Dennis & TV Rider*

Venue Solutions Maiden

*Replay.*



27/01/24 Ellerslie

## Velocious

James McDonald

*Go Racing Burrata Syndicate*

TAB Karaka Million 2YO

*Replay.*



## Quick Ten

*Gus Wigley*

This month we caught up with the man behind Velocious, her breeder Gus Wigley from Inglewood stud. A proud South Island Stud farm now run by Gus and his wife Bianca they have produced stakes winners Velocious (Marsh Trained), Ugo Foscolo (Marsh Trained), Fifty Fifty, Secret Allure, Replique and Zigwig all in a short space of time.

One of the good guys of our industry we were thrilled for Gus to have bred such a special filly.

**EARLY MORNING / LATE NIGHT**

**DERBY / OAKS**

**COFFEE / TEA**

Often 3 a day!

**SERIES / MOVIE**

**FILLY / COLT**

I don't mind either just a good looker

**MEXICAN FOOD / INDIAN FOOD**

**STAYCATION / VACATION**

I spend too much time on farm so must get away!

**COX PLATE / MELBOURNE CUP**

It was always Dad's dream to own a Cox Plate winner and I have inherited that from him!

**TAKE AWAY / DINE OUT**

Anyone who know me won't be surprised by this:  
Both

**STAYER / SPRINTER**